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Summary record of the 50th meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 122: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Second performance report: Final appropriation for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/56/866 and A/56/868)

1. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the final appropriation for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/56/866), recalled that the final performance report for the biennium 2000-2001 had indicated an estimated final expenditure of $2,561,578,000. The Fifth Committee had decided that, rather than appropriate funds, it would give a commitment authority in that amount and revert to consideration of the final appropriation at the Assembly's resumed fifty-sixth session in March 2002. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report, the final appropriation for which approval by the General Assembly was sought, was $2,561,186,900.

2. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/56/868), said that the Advisory Committee had received detailed information on the budget performance in respect of the financial period 2000-2001, which was contained in the annex to its report. Unliquidated obligations in respect of 2000-2001 had amounted to $74,936,000, which represented 2.9 per cent of expenditure, a significant decrease as compared with the previous two bienniums. The Advisory Committee welcomed that development and pointed out that, as a consequence, significant savings should not be expected as the result of any future cancellations of obligations for that biennium. Amounts resulting from cancellations of any obligations would be confirmed after the audit relating to the biennium 2002-2003, which would be reported by the Board of Auditors and considered by the General Assembly in autumn 2004. Member States would therefore be credited in January 2005.

3. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the final appropriation resolution for the biennium 2000-2001 as set out in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General (A/56/866). In so doing, the General Assembly would have also approved the necessary transfers among sections.

4. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation understood that there was a deficit of $35 million in the budget of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services for the biennium 2000-2001. He asked how that deficit would be addressed, taking into account the current budgetary procedures and the financial rules and regulations.

5. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) recalled that the Secretary-General's second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/56/674 and Corr.1) had provided an estimate of the anticipated final level of expenditures. In its related resolution, the General Assembly had approved a combined revised appropriation and commitment authority. The overexpenditure had therefore been authorized and action on it had already been taken by the General Assembly.

6. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation would address the question of the deficit in greater detail in the informal consultations. It would have been helpful if the Controller had cited the number of the General Assembly resolution to which he had referred.

7. His delegation had earlier asked two questions concerning the budget to which the Secretariat had so far not responded. The first question had been a request for written comparative tables for the budgets for the bienniums 2000-2001 and 2002-2003. The second question had concerned the percentage reductions in each section of the budget of the previous biennium approved by the General Assembly. His delegation wished a written response and recalled that the same request had been made on two previous occasions, but without result.

8. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said that the Assembly resolution in question was 56/240 A of 24 December 2001. The reference was contained in the first line of the summary on page 1 of document A/56/866.

9. Responding to the second question raised by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, his understanding was that some tables had been circulated during the informal consultations on the budget proposals and the reductions decided upon by the Committee. If the information contained in those tables

was not satisfactory, the Secretariat would be pleased to provide further details.

10. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the information provided was not satisfactory and his delegation was still awaiting answers in writing to the questions it had raised.

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.84/Rev.1: Comprehensive implementation of the outcome of and follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (A/56/869; A/C.5/56/38)

11. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the Secretary-General's statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.84/Rev.1 contained in document A/C.5/56/38, recalled that the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance had reported to the General Assembly during the main part of its fifty-sixth session and that the Third Committee had taken up the item but had not completed its deliberations. In February 2002, it had adopted a draft resolution concerning follow-up activities to the Conference. The activities proposed in the draft resolution were summarized in paragraph 3 of document A/C.5/56/38 and the additional requirements of $1,178,700, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, were detailed in paragraph 5. The required resources would be charged against the contingency fund, which would be severely depleted as a result.

12. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's related report (A/56/869), said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/56/L.84/Rev.1, expenditures would arise not exceeding $1,074,800 under section 22, Human rights, and $103,900 under section 32, Staff assessment (to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment) of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, as stated in paragraph 9 of the Advisory Committee's report. Additional appropriations would be considered by the Assembly in accordance with the procedures set out in resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 for the use and operation of the contingency fund. However, in view of the fact that the draft resolution was proposed for adoption in March 2002, and that the activities were to be implemented immediately thereafter, it would be necessary, during the current part of the resumed fifty-sixth session, to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments up to the amount indicated in paragraph 9 of the Advisory Committee's report. Such additional appropriation as might be required would then be considered at the main part of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

13. **Mr. Stoffer** (United States of America) said that the issue was a sensitive one for his country and for many other regions of the world. His delegation would have some questions to raise in the informal consultations concerning the appropriations and the structure of the proposed Anti-Discrimination Unit.

14. **Ms. Sanchez-Lorenzo** (Cuba), speaking as coordinator of the Group of 77 and China for Fifth Committee matters, recalled that the matter had also been raised by the Group of 77 and China. Her delegation hoped that the Committee would recommend the draft resolution to the General Assembly for adoption and that the related expenditures would be appropriated in accordance with the procedures for the use and operation of the contingency fund.

Draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.47

15. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/56/L.47 in her capacity as coordinator of the Group of 77 and China for Fifth Committee matters. Although the resolution submitted by Venezuela in its capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, the draft text was the result of consultations and was being submitted with a request that it be approved by the Committee for adoption by the Assembly.

16. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said that the draft resolution had financial implications. The Secretariat was unable to provide the required services within the budget that had been approved and was currently preparing a statement of programme budget implications for the Committee.

17. **Mr. Stoffer** (United States of America) said that his delegation had had informal consultations with the

Permanent Representative of Venezuela, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77 and China and had understood that, pending further consultations to resolve the outstanding issues in a harmonious manner, the draft resolution would not be introduced.

18. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that the draft resolution had been submitted with a view to seeking consensus on the proposals it contained.

19. **Mr. Orr** (Canada) said that he had previously been coordinating consultations on agenda item 123 and had been surprised to see in the Journal that morning that a draft resolution submitted on behalf of the Group of 77 and China would be discussed. Since consensus had not been reached on the draft text, he wondered whether his services as coordinator were required and suggested that the Secretariat should consider who should coordinate further consultations on the draft resolution.

20. **The Chairman** said that the representative of Canada was also a member of the Bureau and should have cleared the matter with the Bureau before raising it publicly.

21. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that the Group of 77 and China wished the Secretariat to provide an indication of the amounts that would be required to restore conference and Internet services to permanent missions.

22. **The Chairman** said that the matter would be considered further in informal consultations.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.